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On the Cover: Running back Keith Ford goes through drills during fall camp. The talented senior is ready to make 2017 a memorable season. Photo by Rob Havens '88.

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Howdy Ags!

This is a pretty special issue for me because it is the start of the 12th year of our magazine.

Every issue we strive to bring you the best of Aggie sports. We strive to give our readers a behind-the-scenes look at the student athletes, coaches and staff that make Aggie Athletics so special. It's a pleasure to interview and shoot pictures of all of our Aggies as they compete in their different sports. Not only does Texas A&M recruit great athletes, but the kids I get to cover are some of the brightest and mature students on campus.

It's a historic time in Aggieland as we experienced a solar eclipse and a Category 4 hurricane this summer. Watching Aggies come together to help each other and thousands of people they don't even know has been truly inspiring.

Our football team has been working hard this summer under the direction of strength & conditioning Coach Mark Hocke. Coach Sumlin has made changes since he arrived in January to help this team have more left in the tank in November. The football experts around the country don't expect much from this group, which players and coaches inside the program say is one of the closest knit groups in several years. In fact, #ItsAboutUs has become the team motto.

Finally, I want to dedicate this issue to my oldest son. He graduated this summer with a degree from the Construction Science Department at Texas A&M. My wife and I are so proud of him! His first word was "Aggies" and his dream was to one day grow up to be an Aggie football player, something he later achieved. Watching him work so hard as a student athlete, grind through an internship and get a great job before he even graduated has been inspiring. We, as parents of a student athlete, have a great appreciation for what our Aggies go through as they train, compete and go to school. We are so proud of you Dan! We Love You!

Gig'em Ags!

Rob '88



Aggieland

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triple threat...

Trayveon Williams works on his catching skills during fall camp. Last year, the talented sophomore running back proved he could produce rushing, catching and returning yards. He led the Aggie rushing attack producing over 1,000 yards, making him the first true freshman to surpass the 1,000-yard barrier. Williams also caught 19 balls and had five kickoff returns.

Photo by Rob Havens '88.





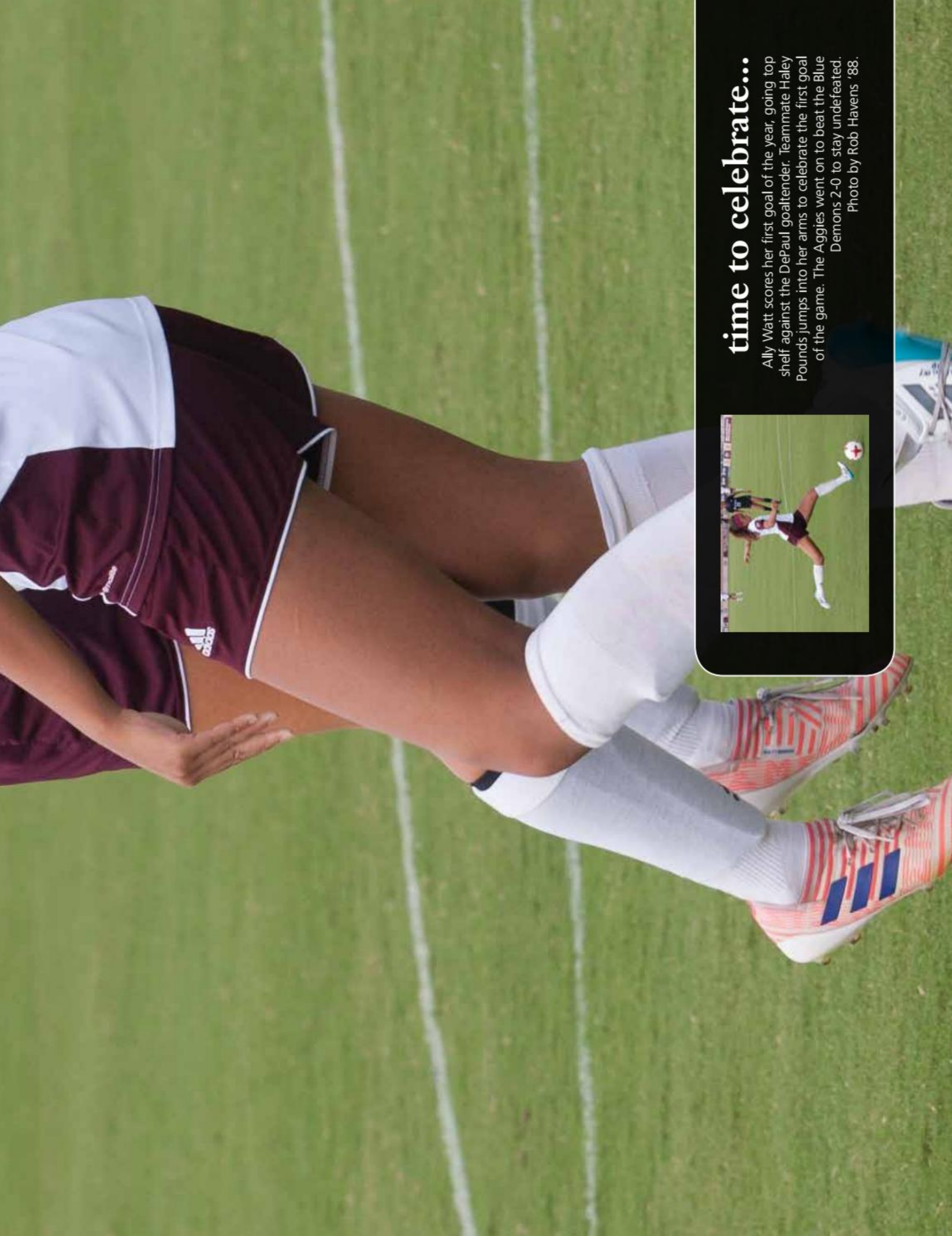
poetry in motion...

Sophomore outside hitter Hollan Hans blends grace and power as she serves against Sam Houston State. In her freshman year, she became only the third player in A&M history to be named AVCA

Region Freshman of the Year. She played in all 30 matches last year and was second on the team with 280 kills.

Photo by Rob Havens '88.





time to celebrate...

Ally Watt scores her first goal of the year, going top shelf against the DePaul goaltender. Teammate Haley Pounds jumps into her arms to celebrate the first goal of the game. The Aggies went on to beat the Blue Demons 2-0 to stay undefeated.

Photo by Rob Havens '88.





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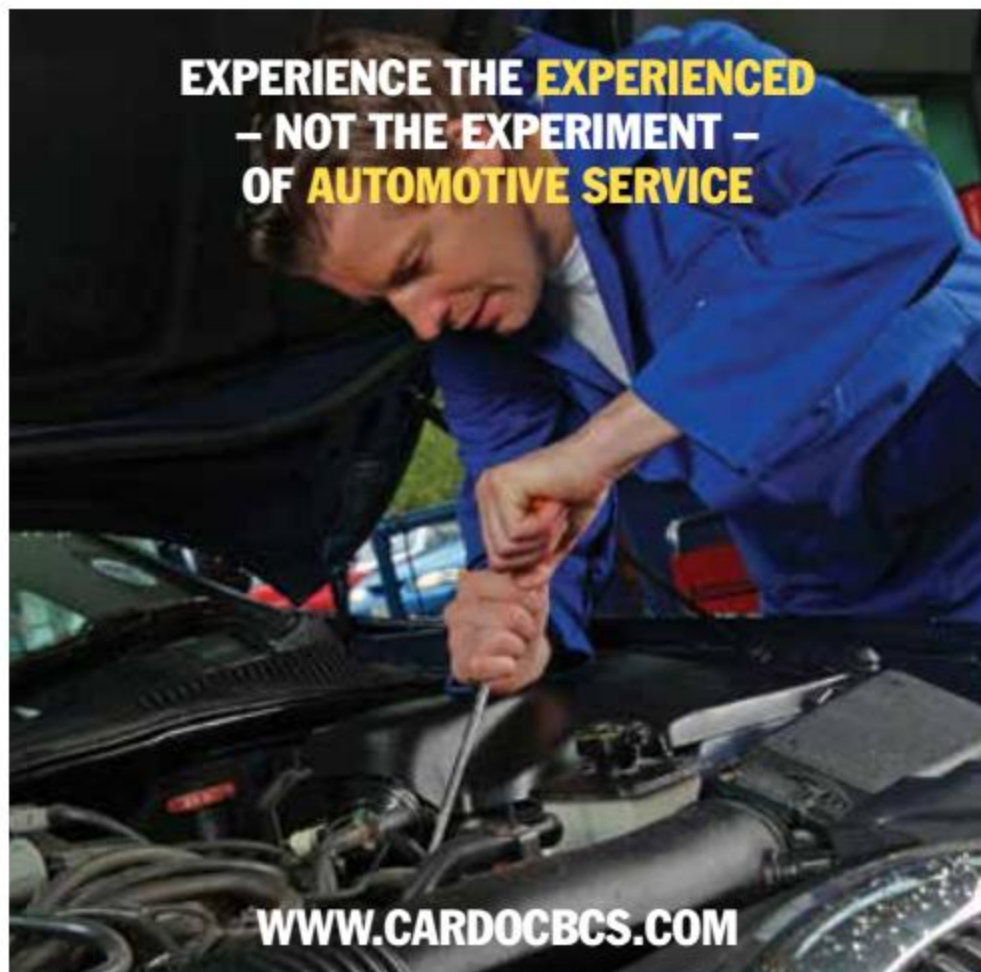
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scoreboard



[soccer] This year's team is loaded with talent and veteran leadership. Coach G returns four seniors and a group of experienced players that are determined to bring home another SEC Championship. After an injury plagued 2016 campaign, this team started the season with two shutout wins on the west coast and are now setting their sights on a successful season that they hope will ultimately finish at the College Cup.



scoreboard



[volleyball] Head Coach Laurie Corbelli and Associate Head Coach John Corbelli began their 25th season leading Aggie Volleyball with by sweeping Sam Houston State in the Texas A&M Invitational. The squad welcomed two freshmen starters, Camille Conner and Makena Patterson, who made instant impacts on the floor for the Aggies. The team returns four seniors who hope to lead the team to the top of the SEC.





[fall football camp] The Aggies welcomed 29 newcomers to fall camp. The first priority was finding a starting quarterback and the coaching staff gave all three quarterbacks the opportunity to separate themselves from the pack. The Aggies lost most of their wide receivers from last year's team, so true freshmen were given the opportunity to earn a starting spot. In addition to the stable of running backs that this year's team has, the Aggies defensive line is one of the the deepest positions on the team.





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2017 FOOTBALL PREVIEW

BY ROB HAVENS '88

Texas A&M goes into the 2017 season with quite a few questions to answer. Coach Sumlin has already made it clear that he plans to run a quarterback-friendly offense this fall. The first question he needs to answer is, who will that quarterback be?

Jake Hubenak is the only signal caller with college-ball experience. He knows the system best and has the ability to make plays. Nick Starkel has a big arm and during the spring game showed he is ready to lead the team. Kellen Mond is the Aggies dual-threat passer that can use his legs to run Mazzone's offense.

Unlike last year, when Summy announced the starter at the end of spring drills, this season no announcement was made and Aggie fans were still left wondering who would be QB1 after fall camp.

The Ags will have to be able to move the ball on the ground this season. The good news is, they have a talented stable of running backs to get the job done. Trayveon Williams led the team last

year as a freshman. He is elusive and has breakaway speed. Keith Ford is a senior and is the thunder to Williams lightning. When the Aggies needed someone to run over people last year, Ford was the guy they turned to. Etwi and Bussey will also help the Aggies in what is one of the deepest positions on the team.

In order for the Aggies to be able to run the ball, they will have to get help from the five guys up front. It's obvious from watching practice that Coach Turner is trying to work his magic and find the best five men to do that. At the beginning of camp, Sumlin announced Erik McCoy was moving from center to guard and Colton Prater would be taking over at center. Connor Lanfear, Koda Martin, Ryan McCollum and Keaton Sutherland are all battling for the five coveted spots.

If you're looking for a surprise area of production this season, look for tight ends Tanner Schorp and Calvin Cline to make a difference. The two players had more passes thrown to them in the spring game than all of last season combined. Both men have size, speed and great hands. If

Sumlin wants to make his offense more quarterback friendly, these guys could be the ticket.

Our wide receiver corps is full of young, unproven talent. Christian Kirk is the lone returning starter, a preseason All-American and the undisputed leader of this team. In what is probably going to be his last season with the Aggies, he is determined to make it his best. Damion Ratley is playing in his final season and has taken reps with the ones during fall camp. Jhamon Ausbon, Quartney Davis, Roshaud Paul, Hezekiah Jones, Aaron Hansford, Kendrick Rogers and Clyde Chriss are all competing for playing time.

On the defensive side of the ball, Coach Chavis has been molding this group for the last couple of years. The defensive line is starting to look like his d-lines did during his time at LSU. Zaycoven Henderson, Kingsley Keke, Daylon Mack, Justin Madubuike, TD Moton, Jayden Peevy and Landis Durham anchor the defensive line that is the strength of the defense.

On the ends, Jarrett Johnson, Qualen Cunningham, Michael Clemons and Tyree Johnson will look to replace Myles Garrett and Daeshon Hall. The player that might surprise everyone is Justin Dunning. Before suffering an injury last year and missing the whole season, he was listed as a defensive back. He returned as a linebacker and during fall camp started working with the defensive ends. He is a physical specimen and if he can stay healthy could be the Aggies secret weapon.

The Aggies may use some 3-4 looks this season and once again the success of our defense may come down to the linebackers. Otaru Alaka, Tyrel Dodson, Anthony Hines III, Buddy Johnson, Cullen Gillaspia and Riley Garner are the players Chavis will look to this fall. Tyrel Dodson got rave reviews during camp and Hines is all that we expected he would be.

Donovan Wilson and Armani Watts should once again dominate in the Aggies defensive backfield. Charles Oliver, Priest Willis, Derrick Tucker, Myles Jones, Larry Pryor, Keldrick Carper, Antonio Howard, Ikenna Okeke, Clifford Chattman, Deshaun Capers-Smith are all battling to get on the field.

The Aggies special teams should be in good shape again this year as well. Punt return specialist Christian Kirk is arguably the most exciting returner in the country. Trayveon Williams and Keith Ford are back as kick return specialist and Mr. Texas Football Roshauud Paul has been taking reps during camp as well.

Shane Tripucka returns for his senior campaign as the punter for the Aggies.

He had a great year last season pinning our opponents inside the 20 twenty-seven times with no touchbacks. The team average was 41.6 for net punting, which ranked seventh in the nation.

Braden Mann should be the kicker again on kickoffs. He limited our opponent's returns by forcing touchbacks with 72.4 percent of his kicks. Daniel LaCamera was automatic on PAT's last year nailing 54 on 54 attempts. He also made 17 of 24 on field goals.

The team has plenty of talent but with 29 newcomers, it all comes down to how quickly they can develop. The key to the Aggies success is our offensive line and choosing the right quarterback. The Aggies will need to limit turnovers and avoid injuries and hope that Hocke's new conditioning program can make a difference down the stretch. The Aggies have a tougher schedule than last year and our young players will have to grow up fast for the team to have a successful season.



2016-2017 RECORD

Overall	8-5
Conference	4-4
Home	5-2
Away	2-2
Neutral	1-1

2017 FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

09/02/17	@ UCLA
09/09/17	vs. Nicholls State
09/16/17	vs. Louisiana-Lafayette
09/23/17	vs. Arkansas
09/30/17	vs. South Carolina
10/07/17	vs. Alabama
10/14/17	@ Florida
10/28/17	vs. Mississippi State
11/04/17	vs. Auburn
11/11/17	vs. New Mexico
11/18/17	@ Ole Miss
11/25/17	@ LSU



2017 FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

09/03/17	vs. Texas A&M
09/09/17	vs. Hawaii
09/16/17	@ Memphis
09/23/17	@ Stanford
09/30/17	vs. Colorado
10/14/17	@ Arizona
10/21/17	vs. Oregon
10/28/17	@ Washington
11/03/17	@ Utah
11/11/17	vs. Arizona State
11/18/17	@ USC
11/24/17	vs. California



2016-2017 RECORD

Overall	4-8
Conference	2-7
Home	3-3
Away	1-5
Neutral	0-0

In the Kyle Field opener, Texas A&M will host Nicholls State. It will be the first time the two schools have met on the gridiron. On paper, the Aggies should run away with this one, but the Colonels were just two points away from the biggest upset in the country last year during their game against Georgia. They averaged 30 points a game last year with a true freshman quarterback, Chase Fourcade, who started all 11 games. Coach Sumlin would like to play as many players as possible in a game like this, but the pesky Colonels will be anxious to prove this is not just a money game for their school.



2016-2017 RECORD

Overall	5-6
Conference	5-4
Home	3-2
Away	2-4
Neutral	0-0

2017 FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

08/31/17	vs. McNeese
09/09/17	@ Texas A&M
09/16/17	vs. Prairie View A&M
09/23/17	@ Sam Houston State
09/30/17	@ Lamar
10/07/17	vs. Northwestern State
10/14/17	vs. Abilene Christian
10/28/17	@ UIW
11/04/17	vs. HBU
11/11/17	@ Stephen F. Austin
11/16/17	@ SE Louisiana



2017 FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

09/02/17	vs. SE Louisiana
09/09/17	@ Tulsa
09/16/17	@ Texas A&M
09/23/17	vs. ULM
10/07/17	@ Idaho
10/12/17	vs. Texas State
10/19/17	@ Arkansas State
11/04/17	@ S. Alabama
11/11/17	@ Ole Miss
11/18/17	vs. New Mexico State
11/25/17	vs. Georgia Southern
12/02/17	@ Appalachian State

In the third game of the season, the Aggies host the Rajun Cajuns. Coach Mark Hudspeth has to replace his starting quarterback and best offensive lineman from last year, not to mention the fill holes at running back and wide receiver. Lafayette does have talent on the defensive side of the ball, which carried the team last year. Seven of their top eight defensive linemen as well as six of their top eight defensive backs returned this season. The Ags will try to knock out the Cajuns early and stay healthy with conference play starting the following week.



2016-2017 RECORD

Overall	6-7
Conference	5-3
Home	3-3
Away	3-3
Neutral	0-1

Once again, the Aggies will travel to Jerry World for the Southwest Classic against the Razorbacks. The Ags have beaten the Hogs the last five years in a row. Arkansas lost a ton of talent from last year, but the annual matchup always brings the best out of both teams. Quarterback Austin Allen is back after leading the conference in passing last year. One of his favorite targets Jared Cornelius, returns for his senior season. The talented wide out had three 100-plus yard receiving performances last year. Dre Greenlaw leads their defense that returns only five starters. He had 138 tackles from the linebacker position, forcing three fumbles and had one interception. The Hogs lost 6'10 319 lbs. Dan skipper off the offensive line but big Frank Ragnow, who was named the nations best offensive linemen in 2016, still anchors the line. The Aggies are more talented and need to show it in their first conference game.



2016-2017 RECORD

Overall	7-6
Conference	3-5
Home	5-2
Away	2-2
Neutral	0-2

2017 FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

08/31/17	vs. Florida A&M
09/09/17	vs. TCU
09/23/17	vs. Texas A&M
09/30/17	vs. New Mexico State
10/07/17	@ S. Carolina
10/14/17	@ Alabama
10/21/17	vs. Auburn
10/28/17	@ Ole Miss
11/04/17	vs. Coastal Carolina
11/11/17	@ LSU
11/18/17	vs. Mississippi State
11/24/17	vs. Missouri



2017 FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

09/02/17	vs. NC State
09/09/17	@ Missouri
09/16/17	vs. Kentucky
09/23/17	vs. Louisiana Tech
09/30/17	@ Texas A&M
10/07/17	vs. Arkansas
10/14/17	@ Tennessee
10/28/17	vs. Vanderbilt
11/04/17	@ Georgia
11/11/17	vs. Florida
11/18/17	vs. Wofford
11/25/17	vs. Clemson



2016-2017 RECORD

Overall	6-7
Conference	3-5
Home	5-2
Away	1-4
Neutral	0-1

SOUTH CAROLINA ATHLETICS

Last year the Aggies went into Tuscaloosa and punched the best team in the SEC square in the mouth. At halftime, a stunned Bryant-Denny Stadium wondered what had happened. Unfortunately the Aggies weren't able to finish them off and once again the Tide was victorious. Under Nick Saban, Alabama has won five SEC titles and four national titles. He has also had 65 players drafted by the NFL. For the Tide, Jalen Hurts returns under center after a stellar freshman campaign. The offense is now under the direction of Brian Daboll, who comes to U of A from the New England Patriots, where he served as tight ends coach. The Tide return 12 of their starters from last year and are still stacked with talent. Until someone knocks them off, they are still the team to beat in the SEC.



2016-2017 RECORD

Overall	14-1
Conference	9-0
Home	7-0
Away	4-0
Neutral	3-1



2017 FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

09/02/17	vs. Florida State
09/09/17	vs. Fresno State
09/16/17	vs. Colorado State
09/23/17	@ Vanderbilt
09/30/17	vs. Ole Miss
10/07/17	@ Texas A&M
10/14/17	vs. Arkansas
10/21/17	vs. Tennessee
11/04/17	vs. LSU
11/11/17	@ Mississippi State
11/18/17	vs. Mercer
11/25/17	@ Auburn

ROB HAVENS '88



2017 FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

09/02/17	vs. Michigan
09/09/17	vs. N. Colorado
09/16/17	vs. Tennessee
09/23/17	@ Kentucky
09/30/17	vs. Vanderbilt
10/07/17	vs. LSU
10/14/17	vs. Texas A&M
10/28/17	vs. Georgia
11/04/17	@ Missouri
11/11/17	@ S. Carolina
11/18/17	vs. UAB
11/25/17	vs. Florida State



2016-2017 RECORD

Overall	9-4
Conference	6-2
Home	5-0
Away	2-3
Neutral	2-1

Last year the Aggies cruised into Starkville ranked in the top four of the CFP poll. Mississippi State shocked the Aggies and took us out of the running for a spot in the playoffs. Nick Fitzgerald, the 6'5 230 lb. Bulldog quarterback used his legs and arm to produce 184 yards on the ground and 209 through the air in last year's game. He led the conference in total offensive yards last year and he is back in 2017 for his junior year. The Bulldogs return seven offensive starters from last year and six more from the defense. Senior Donald Gray who caught 41 passes last year for 709 yards should play a big role in Dan Mullen's offense. You can bet the Aggies won't take the Bulldogs lightly this year. Hopefully they can exact some revenge at Kyle Field.



2017 FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

09/02/17	vs. Charleston Southern
09/09/17	@ Louisiana Tech
09/16/17	vs. LSU
09/23/17	@ Georgia
09/30/17	@ Auburn
10/14/17	vs. BYU
10/21/17	vs. Kentucky
10/28/17	@ Texas A&M
11/04/17	vs. UMass
11/11/17	vs. Alabama
11/18/17	@ Arkansas
11/23/17	vs. Ole Miss

2016-2017 RECORD

Overall	6-7
Conference	3-5
Home	3-3
Away	2-4
Neutral	1-0





Since joining the SEC, the visiting team has come out on top each time the Aggies and Tigers have played. If the Ags hope to end this trend, they will probably have to play the best game of the year. The Tigers have a new quarterback that flirted with the idea of coming to A&M. Jarrett Stidham played for Baylor before transferring to Auburn. He is already considered one of the best QB's in the nation, before taking a snap for U of A. Also in the backfield is Kamryn Pettway who led the SEC in rushing with 122.4 yards per game in 2016. On the other side of the ball, Tray Matthews, a senior DB, leads the Tiger defense that ranked seventh in scoring defense last year. Some experts predict Auburn could win the SEC championship this year, meaning this win at Kyle Field would be huge for the Aggies.

2017 FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

09/02/17	vs. Georgia Southern
09/09/17	@ Clemson
09/16/17	vs. Mercer
09/23/17	@ Missouri
09/30/17	vs. Mississippi State
10/07/17	vs. Ole Miss
10/14/17	@ LSU
10/21/17	@ Arkansas
11/04/17	@ Texas A&M
11/11/17	vs. Georgia
11/18/17	vs. ULM
11/25/17	vs. Alabama



2016-2017 RECORD

Overall	8-5
Conference	5-3
Home	6-2
Away	2-2
Neutral	0-1

On November 11th, former Aggie assistant coach Bob Davie will make his return to Kyle Field. Since he arrived in Albuquerque in 2012, he has turned the program around. In the four years before joining the Lobos, they had won a total of seven games combined. Last year they won nine. His option attack is the strength of his team. The Lobos like to control the ball. The defense has been shaky but Davie upgraded with ten junior college transfers. Quarterback Lamar Jordan and running backs Richard McQuarley and Tyrone Owens return along with four offensive linemen with starting experience. Davie would like nothing more than to come back to College Station and pick up a win.



2016-2017 RECORD

Overall	9-4
Conference	6-2
Home	6-1
Away	2-3
Neutral	1-0

2017 FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

09/02/17	vs. Abilene Christian
09/09/17	vs. New Mexico State
09/14/17	@ Boise State
09/23/17	@ Tulsa
09/30/17	vs. Air Force
10/14/17	@ Fresno State
10/20/17	vs. Colorado State
10/28/17	@ Wyoming
11/04/17	vs. Utah State
11/11/17	@ Texas A&M
11/18/17	vs. UNLV
11/24/17	@ San Diego State



2017 FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

09/02/17	vs. South Alabama
09/09/17	vs. UT Martin
09/16/17	@ California
09/30/17	@ Alabama
10/07/17	@ Auburn
10/14/17	vs. Vanderbilt
10/21/17	vs. LSU
10/28/17	vs. Arkansas
11/04/17	@ Kentucky
11/11/17	vs. Louisiana-Lafayette
11/18/17	vs. Texas A&M
11/23/17	@ Mississippi State



2016-2017 RECORD

Overall	5-7
Conference	2-6
Home	4-3
Away	1-3
Neutral	0-1

Since joining the SEC, the Aggies have not beaten the Tigers in football. There's no doubt that LSU is loaded with talent. New play caller Matt Canada is the new offensive coordinator and Dave Aranda is one of the best defensive coordinators in the country. Head Coach Ed Orgeron is the perfect fit as he is Louisiana born and bred, and he lets his coordinators do their job. Orgeron brings intensity to the game and recruits some of the best talent in the country. The good news for the Aggies is that Leonard Fournette is gone. The bad news is that Derrius Guice is still there. He is a Heisman Trophy candidate and led the SEC in rushing yards last year. Local product Christian LaCouture, who played at A&M Consolidated, returns to defensive end after missing last year with an injury. Beating LSU in Baton Rouge is a tall order but at some point the Aggies will do it. Let's hope this is the year.



2016-2017 RECORD

Overall	8-4
Conference	5-3
Home	5-2
Away	2-1
Neutral	1-1

2017 FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

09/02/17	vs. BYU
09/09/17	vs. Chattanooga
09/16/17	@ Mississippi State
09/23/17	vs. Syracuse
09/30/17	vs. Troy
10/07/17	@ Florida
10/14/17	vs. Auburn
10/21/17	@ Ole Miss
11/04/17	@ Alabama
11/11/17	vs. Arkansas
11/18/17	@ Tennessee
11/25/17	vs. Texas A&M



Q&A WITH EMILY BATES

BY ROB HAVENS '88

When did you start playing soccer?

When I was three! I played for the Purple Kangaroos.

Did you play other sports in school as you were growing up?

Yes. My high school didn't have a soccer team until my senior year, so I played volleyball, basketball and ran track.

Talk about the recruiting process of you coming to A&M.

I visited a few schools around Texas but I knew I wanted to stay close to home because I'm a homebody. I actually really liked Oklahoma State, and then when I came here, like before I even got on campus, I knew this is where I wanted to go. It just felt like home for the moment I stepped on campus. I loved it.

Did you have family that went to A&M that promoted it?

Well my family is actually from Baton Rouge; they attended LSU (laughs) so I'm kind of the outcast.

How has your experience been so far?

It's honestly been better than I could have imagined. It's amazing.

What are you studying? What would you like to do after college?

I'm majoring in psychology with a minor in business. I'm not 100% sure what I want to do after college but I want to try to stay in sports somehow.

What are your thoughts on last year, the good and the bad?

There was definitely a lot of bad things, but a lot of good things too. The injuries that happened really killed our season. But to see the determination of the team making it a memorable season was amazing. We fought through all of the obstacles that were thrown at us, just showed us how strong of a team we could be.

Did you feel pressure to keep the NCAA tournament streak

going? With three games left in the regular season it didn't look promising.

Absolutely! (laughs) We tried not to think about it, just take it game by game. Let's win this game. Then moving on to the next one, let's win this one. After we lost in the SEC tournament, we had no idea what was going to happen. We didn't think we were going to make it but we still had a little bit of hope and then we did.

What was the excitement like when you were announced to get in?

I think it was more of shock honestly. (laughs) But we were all pretty excited!

Talk about this year, are you excited about the upcoming season?

Yes I'm very excited! Our first goal is to bring back an SEC Championship because we have fallen in the standings the last two years. My class is the first

one to not have a championship ring of any sort. That is definitely our main focus and then carrying it on to the post season and looking to make a big run.

Is there a team you're looking forward to playing this year?

Alabama. We lost to them in the regular season in overtime and we beat them in the SEC tournament in overtime. I feel like we have something to prove to them.

What was your favorite game so far?

Beating Florida my freshman year in the SEC. That was a really fun game. They were ranked ahead of us, and the SEC favorite. It was my first SEC game ever and I scored in the first ten minutes and we wound up winning 2-1. That was a huge road win for us and it was a great way to get SEC play started.

What's your favorite Aggie Soccer tradition?

I love the Fish Camp game. When the stands are packed, that's my favorite game of the year, beside like post season. It's just crazy to see that much support for women's soccer. Which usually doesn't happen. Nothing compares to the atmosphere we have here.

What's your favorite Aggie tradition?

I really like Midnight Yell! We don't get to go a whole lot because football season and soccer season overlap. The first time I went I was like this is so cool! It's insane, the traditions here and how many people love them and will come to Midnight Yell.

Who do you hang with on the team?

Brittany Crabtree and I have been friends since we were 12 years old. We played club together and we committed to come here within a week of each other. We are roommates and we do everything together.

What would your dream ending be this year?

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Rugby Club

BY ROB HAVENS '88

The Texas A&M Rugby Club was founded in 1968, making it almost 50 years old. Aggieland Illustrated got to catch up with club president and US Army Captain Andrew J. Brigman, who is currently working on his master's degree at A&M, to find out more about the club and why he decided to join.

"I have played rugby for the last decade, starting during my undergrad at West Point, and have continued to play around the country (Florida to Alaska) as I've moved with the Army," Brigman said. "When I came to A&M, I immediately sought to get involved with the Aggie team."

Brigman told AI that most students join the club because they are looking for an

adventurous sport that offers incredible game play and competition, while at the same time allowing them to experience an unmatched level of camaraderie. Andrew found all of these things when he joined the team.

In the past, approximately 90 percent of the team had not played rugby before joining the club. Today, 70 percent of newcomers that join have prior rugby experience. This club wants to win championships, and they recruit and train to accomplish that goal.

The team of 60 members practices three times a week. Team captain Braeden Hood grew up playing rugby in Australia. Justin Brown and Connor Wilson made last season's All-Conference squad. Another notable member of the team is Marine Staff Sergeant Ethan Bodzin.

We asked Brigman what his favorite moment being on the team has been, and he replied, "The team took 9th place at last year's D1A 7's Nationals. We were

completely written out of the competition by our opponents and declared the worst team in the field by the media. Starting the tournament in the pool of death, we lost two extremely tight matches to teams that went on to the final four and then set about crushing the rest of our opposition to gain our 9th place finish. Ninth may not seem like much, but the fortitude our boys showed rallying from such hard fought and emotionally draining initial matches was an incredible testament to the dedication we have for one another on this team."



Water Ski Club

BY ROB HAVENS '88

Not many people know that Texas A&M has a Water Ski Club. But for club president Cullen Parker, he says that is what brought him to A&M.

"Both of my parents were members of the t.u. ski team; in fact, my mother was the president of that team back in the '90s," Parker said. "It has always been in my blood. I chose to come to A&M for the ski team with dreams of leading the club, and I haven't looked back since."

The club, which began in 1975, competes in individual events that are tallied for a team score. The best five men and women from each school compete in three separate events: slalom, tricks, and jump.

Parker says most members don't have experience in the competitive side of waterskiing; they join the club because they love the water. "I love being able to see collegiate skiers grow, as they move from beginners to being able to compete in tournaments," Parker said.

The club just purchased a brand-new boat for the team, a 2017 Ski Nautique 200, which they will get in September. According to Cullen, they practice every day that the sun is shining, thanks to the

close proximity of a private ski lake called Lords Lake, which is located just outside of campus.

The club consists of about 50 members. Notable members include Jade Hanson '18, who won Division II Women's Tricks, Slalom, and Overall at the National Championships in California last fall; Ryan Bridgford '20, who won Division II Men's Slalom at the National Championships; Cullen Parker '20, who won Division II Men's Overall at the National Championships and placed 3rd in Jump at the 2017 Jr. US Open this past



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summer; and their newest star, athlete Krista Butterfield '21, who is currently ranked as the best women's trick skier in the nation.

"My favorite part about the team is that it has become like a family to me," Parker said. "All of my best friends are on the team, and there is nothing better than getting to lead such a great group of people who all share a deep passion for water skiing."





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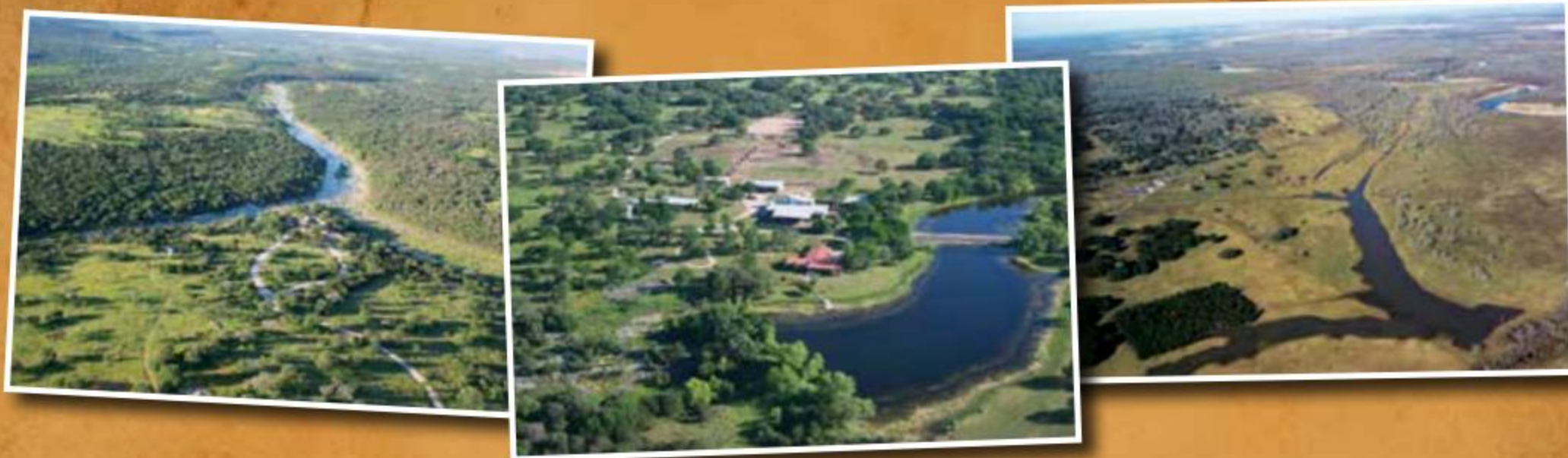


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